WINTER 2008

FOCUS

AFSOC Commando Safety Journal

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

FOCUS

AFSOC Commando Safety Journal

Winter 2009
Volume XV, Number 2

Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster — **Commander**
Col. Brian McNabb — **Publisher**
Sharon Blalock — **Production Manager/Editor/ Graphics**

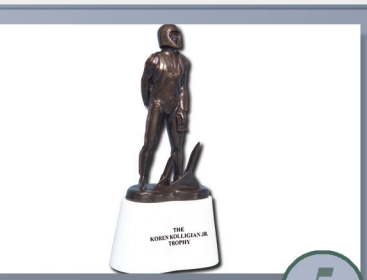
AFSOC's Focus (AFSOC RP91-1, ISSN 1086-6086) is published quarterly by the Director of Safety, Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Florida. This magazine promotes the AFSOC commander's mishap prevention policies.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Focus, HQ AFSOC/SEP, 229 Cody Avenue, Suite 102, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544-5312.
Distribution: The AFSOC Recurring Publications Number is RP 91-1. Distribution in AFSOC is based on a ratio of one copy to seven persons assigned. Other Air Force and DoD units have no fixed ratio and should submit their requests to the OPR.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Contributions are welcome, as are comments and constructive criticism. No payments can be made for manuscripts submitted for publication. Readers may submit articles, photographs, and artwork to: Editor, Focus, HQ AFSOC/SEP, 229 Cody Avenue, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544-5312, DSN 579-5934/Commercial (850) 884-5934/Fax 2883, or e-mail: afsoc.sep@hurlburt.af.mil. Include your name, unit address, phone number, fax number, and E-mail on all submissions. The editor reserves the right to make any editorial changes in manuscripts that will improve the material without altering the intended meaning. All photographs are USAF unless otherwise identified.

ON THE WEB:
Focus can be accessed on the web at:
https://www.my.af.mil

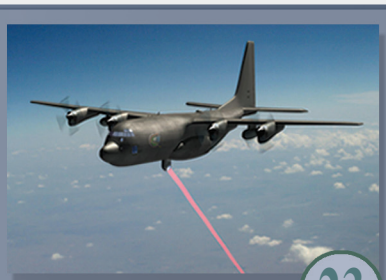
CONTE

Departments

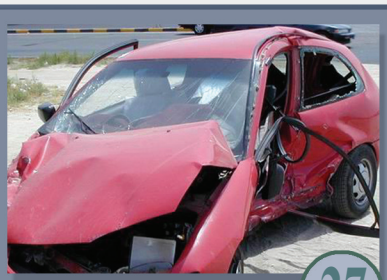


5

15



23



27

NTS

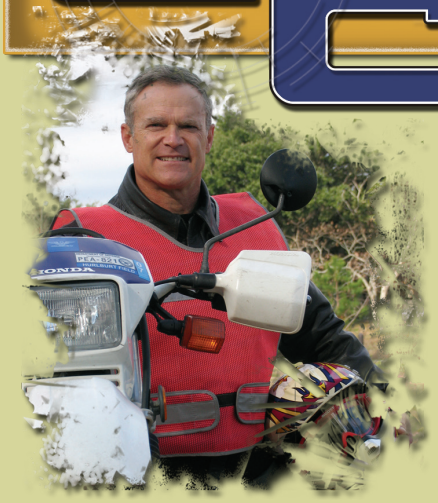
On the cover...

Photo by USAF Photographer
MH-53's Retired!

Features

Director's Corner

COLONEL BRIAN McNABB



We consider ourselves as "special" amongst our Air Force brethren. We have a warrior, can-do attitude that makes us the force of choice for the toughest, no fail missions our nation needs accomplished. We have an excellent reputation amongst the other services, our allies and especially our enemies. We have demonstrated professionalism in our operations and have proven that we can get the job done when "push comes to shove." However, it's a potentially fatal error to let this fact go to our heads.

Assuming that we are inherently "special" or are the best, without continuously focusing on professionalism and discipline is problematic. We cannot let our operational, wartime egos cloud our responsibility to be professional in all areas. Following technical order guidance, complying with Air Force Instructions, using the checklist to accomplish tasks are all examples of being professionals...even when you're not directly involved in combat. Seemingly little things like not wearing a seatbelt, riding a motorcycle without your personal protective equipment (PPE), talking on a cell phone while driving are "cracks in the dam" of a true professional.

Much like the saying "real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not," professionalism is not something that only occurs when someone is looking over your shoulder or you might get caught. It's a slippery slope to let yourself fail your professionalism over the little things. Where do you stop? Skipping a step in the checklist? Following most of your boss's direction? Not wearing your PPE when it's not cool? If you can't be a disciplined professional with the little things, under no pressure, what are you going to do when the heat is on and you need to perform an inspection, launch an aircraft, or make a takeoff?

Being a true professional, means being a professional 24/7...doing the small things and the big, setting the example for others to follow and in the true Wingman philosophy, checking your fellow Airmen. Provide a helping hand to those starting to slip down that slope. Correct those who are cutting the corners. Revector them onto the path of professionalism and be safe.

Readers' COMMENTS

Publisher's Note:

A belated congratulations to all our 2007 Annual Safety Award winners! Our sincere apologies for the lateness in which we are recognizing your outstanding accomplishments.

We have not published a magazine in several months due to significant personnel changes, to include a new editor. Together we will work hard to ensure a quality publication which we hope will inspire Air Commandos to practice and embed positive risk management behaviors in all aspects of their lives.

As always, your comments and suggestions are very important to us. We look forward to hearing from you in 2009!

Readers may submit comments and articles to:

Editor, *Focus*, HQ AFSOC/SEP, 229 Cody Avenue, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544-5312.

DSN 579-5934/Commercial (850) 884-5934/ Fax 2883, or e-mail: afsoc.sep@hurlburt.af.mil. Include your name, unit address, phone number, fax number, and E-mail on all submissions.

View from the Top

By Ambassador Tim Foster
AFSOC Political Advisor

Motorcycling as Extreme Risk Management

Since joining AFSOC in September 2006, I've had an education in the importance of safety, or risk management, to AFSOC's mission. By participating in the daily Ops and Intel meetings, I've come to appreciate the command's vision of highly trained Air Commandos as AFSOC's most important assets. Whatever threatens the safety of AFSOC's people threatens AFSOC's mission. Accidents are one focus of those meetings, and a recurrent theme is off-duty ground mishaps involving motorcycles.

As a reformed motorcyclist, I feel a special empathy for the Airman and the Airman's family each time we learn of another motorcycle mishap, especially when it results in death. I had my share of mishaps and many more close calls during my active motorcycling days, and I'd like to share the story here of why I came to view motorcycling as extreme risk management and how I managed it.

I served in the Army from 1968 to 1971 and saw the newly released film 'Easy Rider' while studying Korean at Defense the Language Institute in Monterey. I thought how awesome it would be to ride a bike across the United States once I completed my service. When I got back from Korea and was discharged in 1971, I bought a Honda 350 in San Francisco and promptly laid it down in a skid on Van Ness Avenue as I rode out of the showroom. Risk management? I didn't know what risk was. I thought if I could ride a 50cc, I could ride anything. So I picked myself and the bike up and rode it home to South Carolina. I was lucky to get there in one piece. I still think about the teeth-grinding near misses I had.

The following year I went to Japan to study Japanese and lucked into a job doing commercials for Honda and Yamaha targeting the American and European markets. We would take off on week-long location jobs to scenic spots like Daisetsuzan National Forest in Hokkaido or Kirishima National Park in Kyushu. I got to ride virtually every bike in their inventories, from 50cc's to their biggest, the Yamaha 650 XS-2 and the Honda CB 750 K-2. (I could ride a 350 so why not a 750?) They wanted action shots, hairpin turns with the larger street bikes,

jumps with the dirt bikes, with mountains in the background. The key risk management decision was in selecting isolated sites where there were few other vehicles. But I took dumb risks by riding bikes I hadn't trained on and thinking I was Evel Knievil. I ended up crashing a bike and cracking a shoulder.

Ten years later, in the Foreign Service, I was posted to the U.S. Embassy in Athens. I bought a Yamaha 650 and my wife and I used it to tour the Greek islands. We'd ride it from Athens to Piraeus, take it on a ferry to Paros or Cos or Mytilene and reach places on the islands few tourists ever got to go. By then I had learned something about risk management and my wife was a great help in that regard, as wives tend to be. It's the hunter/gatherer difference. At that time, the Athens-Piraeus highway made Highway 98 look like a country lane. And drivers in Greece, like drivers in most places, generally don't pay much attention to motorcyclists. Riding that Yamaha 650 from Athens to Piraeus involved extreme risk, from sideswipes to drivers emerging from side streets. The problem was, as every biker knows, I couldn't manage other drivers' behavior. Yet I was responsible for my wife's safety as well as my own. I owed it to my wife and my unborn child, and to the Foreign Service, to manage that extreme risk in a responsible way. So when my son was born, I sold the Yamaha 650 and never rode again.

I realize that's not a risk management style that's going to catch fire among AFSOC's bikers or aspiring bikers. But those of you who are bikers have certain advantages you should pursue. AFSOC doesn't simply exhort safety, it provides training. Take it if you haven't and train on the bike you ride. Observe the rules of motorcycle safety, from wearing the right clothes and protective gear, to driving three times as defensively as the cars around you. Also, check out the Harley Davidson safety videos on www.youtube.com.

AFSOC's rigorous attention to safety AND training reflects its quiet professionalism. The uninformed view is that the very things that Air Commandos are called upon to do require a cavalier attitude to safety. That's audacity without Lt Gen Wurster's prudence. Quiet professionals realize attention to safety and practicing sound risk management are the keys to their success. That doesn't stop when you're off duty. It's part of your duty to yourself, to your family, and to your fellow Air Commandos.

2007 Koren Kolligian Jr. Trophy Goes to MH-53M Pilot

By Lt Col Darrin M. Valha
Deputy Director AFSOC Safety

Lt Col Eugene V. Becker

Hurlburt Field's 20th Special Operations Squadron Director of Operations and MH-53M evaluator pilot has been selected as the recipient of the 2007 Koren Kolligian Trophy.

On September 7, 2007, Lt Col Eugene V. Becker and his MH-53M Pave Low crew were on a night tactical training mission. In a hover, just past a tight landing zone cut among 90 foot trees, his aircraft suddenly began vibrating. He immediately took the controls and directed a go around. Lt Col Becker then disengaged the automated flight control system, suspecting a possible electrical malfunction. When the problem persisted, he ordered the system back on, continued to execute a go-around, and managed to make two "mayday" calls. Unbeknownst to the crew, the aircraft had just experienced a catastrophic failure of the intermediate gearbox. Lt Col Becker continued a tight, tree-top level turn in an attempt to reach the landing zone for an emergency landing. During the turn the rotor speed began to decay dangerously low. Fearing they might not reach the landing zone, Lt Col Becker minimized control inputs to conserve engine power and prevent further decay of the rotor. The moment the MH-53M was clear of the trees, Lt Col Becker entered an autorotative descent into the landing zone to maintain enough rotor speed for a survivable landing. Utilizing over 1,000 hours of night vision goggle experience, he waited for the precise moment to execute the final maneuver. Knowing he had only one chance, he leveled and cushioned the landing with impeccable timing as the aircraft spun violently into the ground. The force of the impact fractured the left main landing gear, the tail rotor drive shaft, and severed the tail pylon.

Had it not been for Lt Col Becker's superior airmanship, professional skill, and decisive actions during this mission, Lt Col Becker and his seven-man crew would have most likely impacted in a heavily wooded forest. From the initial indications and onset of aircraft vibrations, to emergency engine shutdown, the entire sequence of events had lasted a mere 50 seconds.

The last AFSOC recipient of the Kolligian Trophy was also a MH-53M pilot

assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron. Then Captain Steven Edwards, was awarded the trophy on May 6, 2005 by General John P. Jumper, for heroic actions during a combat mission flown the night of April 12, 2004. Despite wounds and a helicopter crippled by enemy fire, Capt Edwards safely flew his aircraft and crew home.

The Koren Kolligian Jr. Trophy is presented each year in the name and memory of 1st Lieutenant Koren Kolligian Jr., an Air Force pilot who was declared missing in the line of duty when his T-33 Shooting Star aircraft disappeared off the California coast 14 September 1955, while trying to bring his crippled aircraft home. The trophy was established in 1958 to recognize outstanding feats of airmanship by aircrew members who, by extraordinary skill, exceptional alertness, ingenuity or proficiency, averted accidents or minimized the seriousness of accidents in terms of injury, loss of life, aircraft damage, or property damage. The trophy is the only Air Force individual safety award personally presented by the Air Force Chief of Staff.

2007 ANNUAL AIR FORCE SAFETY AWARDS

KOREN KOLLIGIAN JR. TROPHY

LT COL EUGENE V. BECKER, 20 SOS

SAFETY PLAQUE RECIPIENTS

FLIGHT:

4TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

8TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

15TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

16TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

353D SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP

EXPLOSIVE:

CATEGORY 1

1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

GROUND:

1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

AFSOC

Distinguished Aircrew Safety Awards

9th Special Operations Squadron

Maj Gregory Buchanan	Aircraft Commander	1 SOW/A8PF
Capt Gregory LeCrone	Pilot	9 SOS/DOM
Capt Emmanuel Cao	Navigator	9 SOS/IT
Capt William Kelly	Navigator	9 SOS/ADO
TSgt Jeremy Coyle	Flight Engineer	9 SOS/DOO
SrA Harry Tabata	Radio Operator	9 SOS/DOM
SSgt Kenneth Nield	Loadmaster	1 SOG/OGKJ
A1C Nicholas Hagan	Loadmaster	9 SOS/LM

The crew of an MC-130P distinguished themselves on October 2, 2007 while flying in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM by airdropping humanitarian aid supplies during a high priority, short-notice mission and successfully overcoming a dangerous mishap. The crew successfully mitigated the severity of a critical airdrop malfunction. Shortly after the CDS bundles left the aircraft, improperly rigged parachutes created a safety of flight hazard as the anchor cable and deployment bag dangled dangerously close to the horizontal stabilizer. The crew improvised a device to cut away the cable and permit the cargo ramp and door to close safely. In addition, the crew relayed their situation to the identically rigged MC-130P, preventing another potential mishap.

16th Special Operations Squadron

Maj Carl Armour	Aircraft Commander	16 SOS/ADO
Capt Michael Cundiff	Pilot	16 SOS/DOO
Capt John Vala	Electronic Warfare Officer	1 SOG/OGV
SSgt Timothy Carson	Flight Engineer	16 SOS/DOFA
Amn Sean Taylor	Loadmaster	16 SOS/DOFA

On 21 August 2007, while returning from a combat mission the crew noticed that the main landing gear would not go to the down and locked position for landing. As the crew orbited during daylight in hostile territory to expend excess fuel and munitions, the utility hydraulic system developed a massive leak and sprayed fluid onto the hot gun barrel. This hydraulic fluid vaporized into toxic fumes, which filled the aircraft as the utility system drained to a critical level. The crew swiftly moved to secure the leak, but just as they eliminated the smoke and fumes the number one propeller low oil light illuminated. Despite compounded emergencies, the crew maintained flight discipline, shut down the affected engine, and landed safely with an engine out, malfunctioning gear and high cross winds. The crew remained alert during egress and detected an oxygen leak, greatly mitigating risk to the first responders.

20th Special Operations Squadron

Lt Col Eugene Becker	Aircraft Commander	20 SOS/DO
Maj Scott Yeatman	Co-Pilot	20 SOS/DORM
A1C Evan Pinkerton	Flight Engineer	20 SOS/DORF
SrA Joshua Plant	Flight Engineer	20 SOS/DORM
A1C Bradley Jordan	Aerial Gunner	20 SOS/DOOD
SSgt William Sell	Instructor Aerial Gunner	20 SOS/DOPT

On 8 September 2007, the aircrew was performing a night time, low-level, insertion/extraction training mission at a small landing zone when the helicopter suffered an intermediate gear box failure; an exceptionally rare and catastrophic event. Realizing imminent danger at an altitude of 150 feet above ground level, the aircrew worked rapidly to get the helicopter safely on the ground. Though the helicopter was destroyed, the aircrew's heroic actions saved the lives of seven individuals; a safe ending to a potentially catastrophic event.

Motorcycle (PMV-2) Analysis

A recent review of the Air Force's Class A, B, and C motorcycle data revealed some interesting information. The AF Safety Center looked at 582 Class A/B/C mishaps from FY-06 through March 08.

* During this time period there were 40 deaths, six permanent total disabilities, and 530 lost time mishaps (Class B and C combined).
* Alcohol incidents accounted for less then 3% of the mishaps but in 12 cases people were driving motorcycles legally drunk (.09 – .24 BAC).
* 13% of the people either fatally injured or suffering permanent total disability were not wearing required personnel protective clothing.
* The most dangerous time to operate a motorcycle is from 1500-1800hrs (31%) followed closely by 1800-2400hrs (26%) and 1200-1500hrs (24%).
* Airmen E-1 through E-6 account for over 86% of mishaps.
* Worst months for motorcycle mishaps were July, April, August, and May.
* FY08 was slightly below the first six months of FYs 06 and 07 by about 5% (FY-06 had 31% in first six months and FY-07 had 35% in first six months).

AFSOC PURSUES WORLD-CLASS OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH THROUGH VPP

By Major General Kurt A. Cichowski
AFSOC Vice Commander

The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is an enhanced safety program that focuses on developing and caring for the safety and welfare of our Airmen, civilians, and their families; a program all of us should know and understand. Originating in the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA--the US governmental agency charged with enforcing legislation associated with how employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace for their employees) realm, VPP is based upon a cooperative relationships between management, labor, and OSHA to develop and promote a comprehensive safety and occupational health management system.

Complementing the Air Force Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Management System, VPP helps identify hazards and train people to drive down both mishap rates and overall injuries. VPP as an Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21) initiative focuses on enhancing safety programs already in place while developing employee involvement. The Defense Safety Oversight Council selected VPP for use within the DoD after data showed a tremendous reduction in mishap rates and associated mishap costs in civilian and federal organizations that already comply with VPP. In response to the SecDef's 2006 call to reduce mishaps by 75%, Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen Norton Schwartz, formally signed the Department of the Air Force, Air Force Concept of Operations for the AF VPPs on 29 October 2008, emphasizing

USAF's commitment to safety and health excellence.

Additionally, the VPP recognizes organizations demonstrating a commitment of excellence to their occupational safety and health programs. It requires no additional safety programs be created, just an enhancement of those already in place. Following a formal certification process, OSHA will recognize qualifying individual programs into one of three categories: 1) Star status, 2) Merit status, or 3) Star Demonstration status [recognition for worksites that address unique safety and health issues]. Becoming a VPP Star status recipient is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of both employers and employees who together have achieved an exemplary health and occupational safety program, and is the DoD goal for each military installation.To expound upon the VPP, let me answer a few questions.

What is VPP?

Since the inception of the VPP in 1982, OSHA has used the program to achieve voluntary buy-in throughout corporate America with the goal of a best-in-class industry safety and health program exceeding OSHA standards. This program has shown dramatic results by ensuring a safer workplace coupled with a reduction in the costs associated with safety related injuries, lost work days, and damage to equipment. Simply put, VPP is getting every one of us in the AFSOC family to actively identify, and then take action, to rid safety and health hazards both on and off the job.

Why will VPP be implemented in AFSOC?

We already have Air Force instructions telling us how to do our jobs safely, as well as Safety programs ensuring we institutionally do things right. What the VPP initiative does is take the AFSOC health and safety programs up a notch and work to inculcate a culture change within our warriors, civilian workers, and our families. By implementing VPP, we lower the overall mishap rate as well as increase the health and wellness of our work force and their families. We are teaching each Wingman to identify hazards in the work area, and then empower them to be part of the solution. You always hear that, "Safety is priority 1," we want it to become like breathing in the air, where safety is now integrated into everything we do and every decision we make.

How will VPP be implemented in AFSOC?

We don't need to reinvent what we are doing; but we as a command have to improve our safety record. The recent flying history safety record shows what we can do when we put our minds to it, about all the attendant issues that cause a flying mishap. Our current record shows the dramatic kind of improvement that can result. We now need to address our safety program in the aggregate and develop the same kind of mindset to the ground and weapons side of safety. VPP will require our commanders, supervisors, Airmen, civilian employees, and encourage our contractor personnel, to create a partnership towards developing this safety culture. Everyone

is responsible for the accountability and ownership in improving work center safety.

What is the current status of VPP integration in AFSOC?

The initial stages of implementing VPP in AFSOC are complete. The 1 SOW and 27 SOW have each received a program gap analysis, a review by an outside Air Force VPP Assessment Team which identifies areas for improvement between existing AFOSH Standards and OSHA VPP requirements. The analysis showed both wings are well on their way to achieving "STAR" status with the 1 SOW sitting at 71% complete or in progress, and the 27 SOW at 82% respectively. For AFSOC, we'll administer the MAJCOM program through a working group in the Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council (ESOHC) while the installation wing commanders will be the lead agent for VPP in their wings.

Will VPP replace other AF/AFSOC programs?

The short answer is, "No", since the focus is to enhance our command's already established safety and occupational health programs. However, both our current MAJCOM on-duty and off-duty safety records are showing an alarming and exceedingly worrisome trend for this past year. VPP gives us a tool to reverse this trend and help usher in a culture change in our Air Commandos. This is not just a ground, flying, or weapons safety program. VPP's end result is to have a safe mindset ingrained into all Air Force workers and our contractor support personnel. The intent is move beyond a compliance driven effort towards one of management and workforce partnership. We've got to do everything possible to preserve our most important resource, our people. As we all become more familiar with VPP, it will stimulate everyone involved, the corporate body concerned in our airpower generation, to institute new programs where needed, and perfect those already in place with the desired end of providing safe and healthy work conditions. Ultimately, we want co-workers telling their colleagues, "Hey, put your earplugs in," or, "wouldn't it be better if we did this action in this new/different, but safer way."

Are VPP assessments the same as compliance inspections?

VPP starts with compliance. Worksites are still going to be required to be compliant with OSHA standards. However, VPP assessments also focus heavily on the mishap prevention process and corrective actions taken, relating to identified safety and health issues. Once an installation has achieved OSHA Star status, the focus will then be one of constant, continuous improvement along the lines of the AFSO21 desired outcome. The intent is to have all involved, management, workers, and their families understand and contribute to a safer environment.

What is a good example of how VPP would modify or enhance an existing safety program?

We'll know we have this licked when we see a change in a compliance driven programs into one of partnered

performance enhancing. This means employee involvement in executing their own organization's safety program to include the inherent responsibility and accountability for identifying and then correcting unsafe and/or unhealthy conditions. This kind of enhanced prevention effort might include employee/management/union representatives collectively managing safety programs, conducting facility inspections, and participating in mishap investigations.

Is VPP implementation mandatory at all bases and all organizations?

Within the Air Force, the VPP will apply to all military personnel in the Air Force to include active duty, reserve components, and government civilian employees. Air National Guard components have two options to implement the program; they can either participate in the host installations' efforts or create and become involved in one of their own. Lastly, while contractors will retain the sole responsibility to comply with OSHA standards, they will be notified of each installations' intent to participate in the VPP and will then be required to submit their safety and health plan, as well as a corresponding site safety checklist to base contracting. It is the intent to include contractors in the VPP effort.

Is AFSOC implementing VPP at overseas bases? What about deployed locations?

The command's focus is on our two stateside installations. Our two SOGs located overseas, and any of our tenant units stationed within the CONUS or OCONUS will participate within their respective host base VPP efforts. At this time, there are no plans to implement VPP at any deployed location; however, the mindset and culture change we are attempting to generate through the VPP process should prevail throughout all our worldwide mission locations.

In the end, our Air Force needs all our Wingmen to be safe because America needs our full team in the fight to support and defend our nation's interests. You can learn much more by visiting the following sites:

USAF VPP Community of Practice
mil/afknprod/ASPs/CoP/OpenCoP.asp?Filter=OO-SE-AF-07

AFSOC VPP Community of Practice
https://wwwd.my.af.mil/afknprod/ASPs/CoP/OpenCoP.asp?Filter=OO-SE-SO-07

Additional detailed program information can be found at the OSHA VPP site:
http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/vpp/index.html
http://www.vpppa.org/index.cfm

OSHA criteria are found in the OSHA Guidance Manual "CSP 03-01-002-TED 8.4-Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP): Policies and Procedures Manual."
http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=DIRECTIVES&p_id=2976

Unit Weapons Safety Representatives

(Not just another thankless additional duty)

By TSgt Julius E. Parker
1 SOW/SEW

How many times have you heard, "I didn't volunteer for this additional duty" or "I don't know why I was given an additional duty I know nothing about?" I have heard these statements many times in my career. Actually, I have said them on a few occasions. As I have gotten older, wiser and more experienced, I began to take pride in my work and accomplishments. I realized what the consequences would be if there were no second set of eyes to look at daily explosive tasks.

I am a Munitions System Specialist by trade, more affectionately know as an AMMO troop working as a Weapons Safety Manager at Hurlburt Field. I am writing this article not to talk about AMMO troops or Wing Weapons Safety Managers but about an additional duty that goes hand-in-hand with these duties. What is this additional duty, you ask? Well, I will give you three guesses based on these facts:

- Fact 1: Unit Commander's with ammunition & explosives assigned appoint individuals to perform this additional duty.

- Fact 2: Once appointed the individual has 30 days from the date appointed to obtain training on their duties and responsibilities.

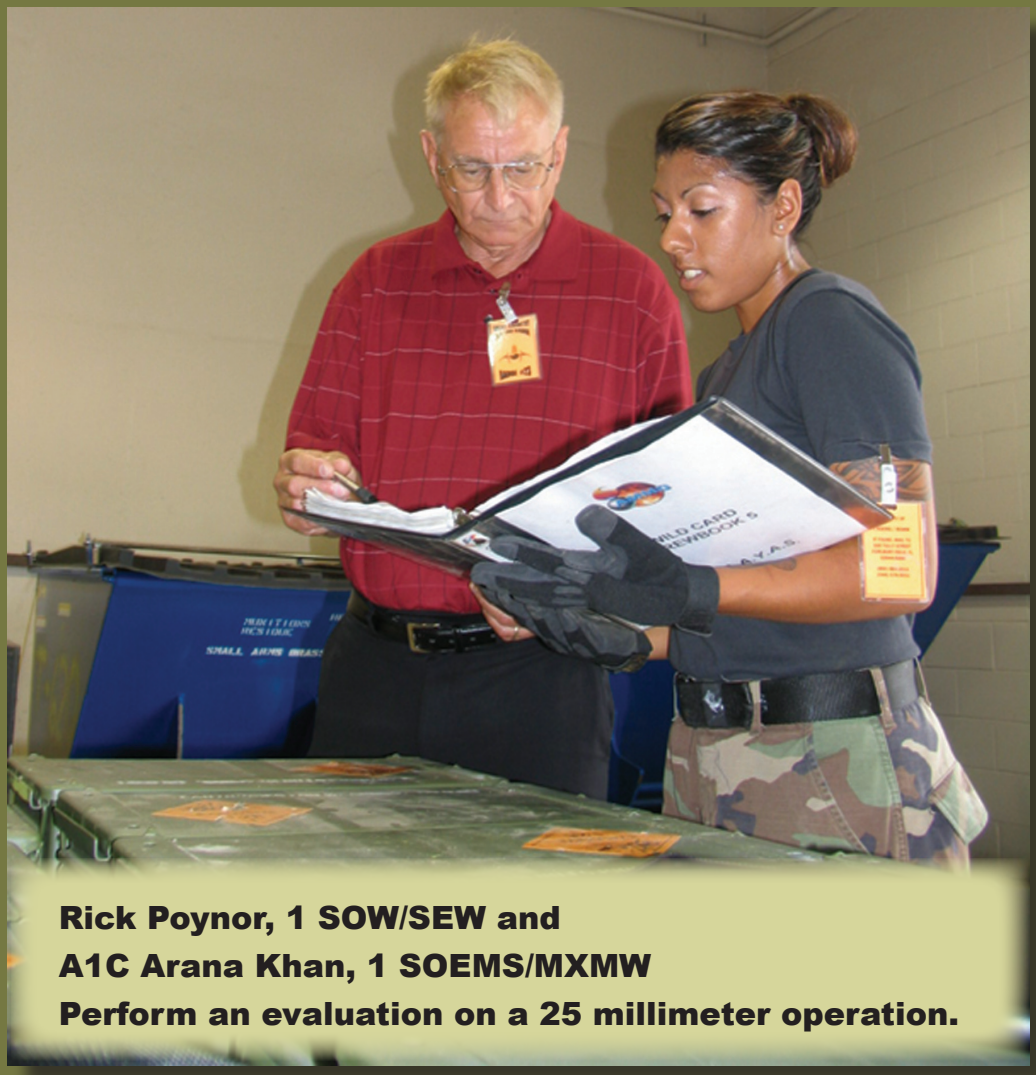
- Fact 3: The appointee works hand-in-hand with squadron personnel and the installation Wing Safety agency in order to keep the unit Commander's safety program running in the right direction.

Have you guessed yet? I am talking, of course, about the Unit Safety Representatives (USR); more specifically the Unit Weapons Safety Representatives (UWSR).

As Wing Weapons Safety Managers, we are responsible for the 1 SOW as a whole but we cannot be everywhere all the time. This is where the UWSR comes into play. The UWSR is one of the most important, but often the least appreciated, additional duties. Unit Weapons Safety Representatives have knowledge of the day-to-day explosive operations within their units, ensuring explosive safety standards are met/maintained. Constant vigilance by the 1 SOW and UWSR goes a long way towards ensuring lives and property are protected.

Now, you may think being a UWSR does not make you a lifesaver, but I beg to differ. Imagine the following scenario happening in your unit; you decide to conduct a spot inspection on the vehicle used to transport explosives, just before a two-man crew departs to pick up munitions from the Munitions Storage Area (MSA). During your inspection, you find that there is only one fire extinguisher mounted to the vehicle and it is undercharged. You advise the individuals to replace it with two serviceable 2A:10BC extinguishers for the vehicle and you write them up for not following written guidance. The response is "we have to go pick up some ground burst simulators and some trip flares from the munitions storage area ASAP for the upcoming ORI. It's Friday and a short trip. We'll swap the extinguisher first thing Monday morning. Besides, we've been transporting munitions this way for the last three weeks." So you think "why not," after all the MSA is only seven miles away and the two individuals in the vehicle have experience transporting explosives. You decide to discontinue your inspection and do not notice that during the rush to get to the MSA, the vehicle operator failed to check the vehicle's DD Form1800 which shows the electrical system has a short.

While returning from the munitions area, the individuals transporting the explosives smell smoke inside the driver's compartment of the vehicle. Before they are able to determine the exact location of the smell, flames appear under the dashboard causing both driver and passenger to evacuate the vehicle. Thinking quickly, the passenger grabs the fire extinguisher, pulls the safety pin, aims the nozzle at the center of the blaze, presses the trigger and is met with a little puff of dust. The blaze envelopes the cab and reaches the bed of the truck at an alarming rate, setting the wooden crates of munitions on fire. By the



Rick Poynor, 1 SOW/SEW and
A1C Arana Khan, 1 SOEMS/MXMW
Perform an evaluation on a 25 millimeter operation.

time the fire department arrives the vehicle and munitions are destroyed. The driver and passenger escape with 2nd and 3rd-degree burns from attempting to put out the fire without the use of a fire extinguisher. They will recover, but their lives and yours, will never be the same.

Now, I never said saving a life means keeping someone from dying. Sometimes saving a life means preventing someone from making a mistake that will cost them their career or possibly costing you yours. This may seem like an unlikely story, however, no one can predict the future. There is only one thing you can do as a UWSR, you can try to change the outcome by doing the right thing and verifying that the individuals in your units do the same. By committing yourself to this additional duty, you ensure that individuals working within your squadron place safety at the forefront.

Take pride in what you do, take care of your fellow service members, and most importantly never sell your position short. If you never hear it again let me be the first to tell you, we appreciate every one of you as a Unit Weapons Safety Representative.

Air Force Wingman

Safety Gram

Reclining Seats – No!

Recently the Air Force lost another valued member while riding as a passenger in a government motor vehicle on-duty. What was significant about this fatality was that the member was wearing his seatbelt! Unfortunately, he had the seat reclined four inches—rendering the effectiveness of the seatbelt negligible.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) conducted a study in 1988 that confirmed the danger of reclined seats. Results showed that three-point restraints offer good protection only if worn properly. An occupant who wears a seat belt while reclined is not "centered" in the belt, rendering it ineffective for spreading crash forces over the body. The NTSB stated that the protection offered by any type of seatbelt is compromised when the seat is reclined, presenting a "potentially dangerous combination in a moving vehicle." The study also noted that although some vehicle owner's manuals warn of the dangers of reclined seat backs in moving vehicles, the warnings do not state specifically what degree of recline is dangerous. The NTSB reported that as little as one inch of slack in the shoulder harness increases the chance of injury. The greater the slack, the greater the likelihood of injury.

All Air Force members operating or riding in any motor vehicle are reminded that seats should be in the upright position, and that their seatbelt should be securely fastened across their chest with no slack to ensure maximum effectiveness of their seatbelt.

Analysis of AFSOC's "101 Critical Days of Summer" and FY 2008 Mishap Review

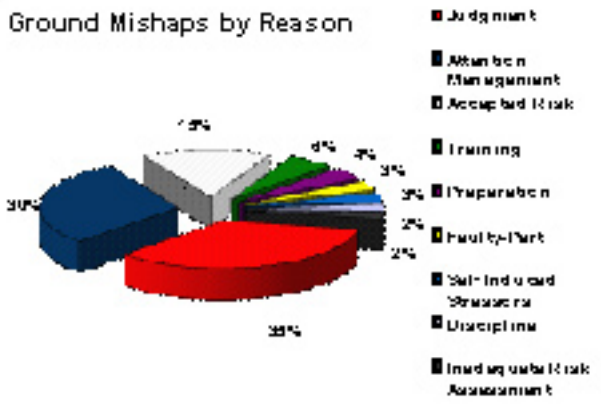
Ground Safety Review

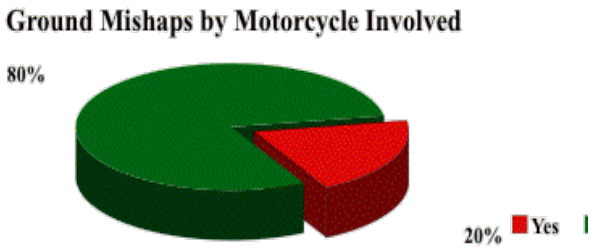
After reviewing this year's mishap experience for AFSOC the only word that comes to mind is "grim". While we expected an overall increase in the number of mishaps with the addition of the 27 SOW, we did not expect to see the large number of fatal mishaps sustained during the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign. This past fiscal year our fatal mishap rate rose 200% as compared with 2007. This gave us an off-duty fatal rate of 34.12 percent compared to the over-all USAF rate of 11.16. In other words, our command had 6.42 percent of the total fatal mishaps for the entire USAF (4 of 62). This is the highest fatal rate the command has had since 2004.

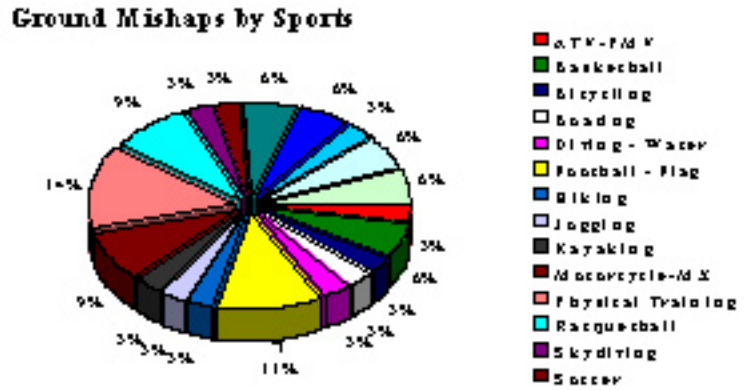
One area that we should always experience a low percentage of mishaps is on-duty. This is due to the fact that we should always have complete control and oversight over operations within our sphere of influence. Normally we see about a 3 to 1 ratio of off-duty to on-duty mishaps. This past year it was almost a 50/50 split.

One key to successfully decreasing on-duty mishap potential is following established guidance. Unfortunately this has not been the case in FY08.

Failure to follow technical data was identified as the key causal factor in several of our more serious mishaps this past year. While we did see a decrease in the overall number of "on-duty" mishaps by about 10%, the costs associated with these incidents increased dramatically. In FY 07 the command spent $984,025.00 on Industrial Property Damage (IPD) mishaps. This cost increased to $4,223,324.00 in FY 08 resulting in an increase of just over 329 percent. Almost half of this cost came from one IPD mishap in which a 7.5 Ton crane tipped over onto an MH-53 during heavy maintenance while at a deployed location.







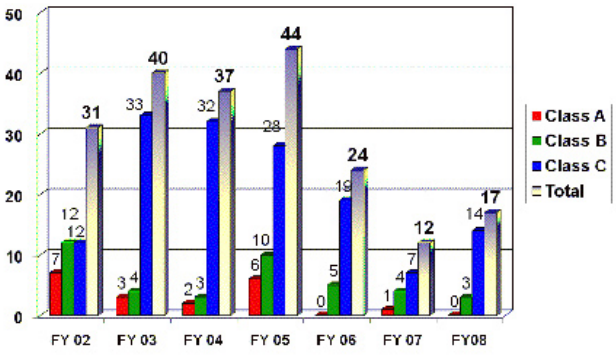
The one area that we were extremely successful was in off-duty PMV operations. As a command, we did not sustain a single fatal mishap due to either operating a 4 wheel or 2 wheel vehicle. This is extremely important since this is the leading cause of fatal mishap within the USAF. For the previous two fiscal years AFSOC sustained at least one motorcycle fatality. While the lack of a fatal motorcycle mishap is commendable, we are still plagued with a large number of non-fatal mishaps involving motorcycles to include one permanent partial disability (loss of a leg).

Sports and Recreation (S&R) incidents have increased by 57% with the addition of Cannon this year. The biggest issue we are seeing is Physical Training preparation. Personnel are not properly warming up prior to activity. Personnel should keep in mind is that stretching cold muscles does nothing towards preventing injury. To properly stretch muscles need to be warm. An example of warming up your muscles would be to slowly jog for about 10-15 minutes then stretch out for 10-15 minutes before going for that run. We all need to keep in mind when ever we do things off-duty as well as on-duty to use Personal Risk Management (PRM). Thinking through a situation and the effect it could have if something goes wrong could help prevent a serious injury.

Flight Safety Review

The command aviation safety trend continued to improve in FY 08. Although no Class A mishaps occurred with our primary aircraft, there were several incidents with leased PC-12 and MQ-1B Predators. Instead of running on with a list of numbers dealing with hours and percentages, we'll give a brief summary of all AFSOC's FY08 A, B, and C flight mishaps (fig 1) and the factors and costs associated. Let's take a look at the 3 Class B and 14 Class C mishaps. (Figure 1)

Class B mishaps involve damage



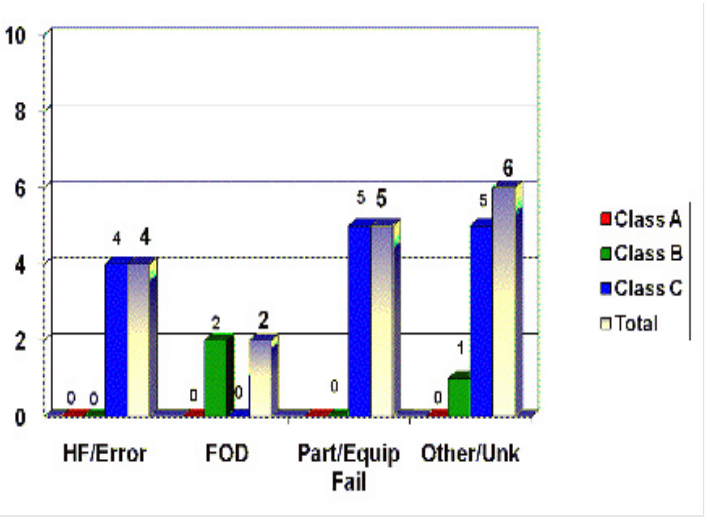
of over $200K and less than $1 million. Foreign object damage (FOD) accounted for two of these involving an AC-130H and an AC-130U gunship. At an unknown time, both ingested FOD damaging the compressor section of the engine with a total cost was $239K and $245K respectively. The third Class B involved an MC-130H Talon. At some point in the maintenance process, the crew entrance door was left open during heavy rainfall and winds. There was water intrusion in to some of the electronic components under the flight deck which wasn't discovered until the next flight when, as the aircraft became airborne, systems began to fail. It seems that once the first component failed, a series of other failures occurred to the tune of $642K. Now you know why your mom always told you to keep the door closed. On to the Class Cs.

This year we experienced 14 Class C mishaps which are mishaps that involve damage over $20K but less than $200K. Grand total of all AFSOC Class Cs was $875K and the majority involved the MC-130H. They experienced separate incidents of 2 bird strikes, 2 blown tires, an auxiliary power unit fire, a loadmaster suffered a broken leg, and the granddaddy of them all.....taxiing into a unmarked obstruction. With the AC-130H/U gunships, they served as flying lightening rods with each encountering a lightning strike. The MC-130W was limited to one refueling hose failure to retract and an internal gearbox failure. The MC-130P also had a bird strike and a sister service individual who injured himself during a personnel airdrop. The last Class C involved a U-28 tail scrape where the pilot flared just a little high.

Now, let's take a glance at Predator mishaps. Technically they are non-rate producing but as valuable assets to AFSOC we need to look at what we can do to improve and learn from their incidents. We had 2 Class A, 1 Class B, and 3 Class Cs with the 2 A's related to lost link. Self explanatory as in "if you can't control something it will eventually crash" resulting in the loss of just under $8M in assets. The sole Class B had trouble staying on the runway during landing. Two of the Class Cs were caused by hail damage and the other a power plant failure. This leads us to our last but also leased.....the PC-12.
Both mishaps the PC-12 experienced were totally preventable. One Class A occurred when the aircraft encountered wake turbulence while executing pattern work. The other was a case of attempting to land an aircraft without the gear down. Both self critiquing and both very lucky there were no major injuries. Except of course to the almost destroyed aircraft. This leads to the bottom line.

While FY08 was a better year for aviation safety in AFSOC, it can always be improved upon.

Figure 2 shows major casual findings of the mishaps, and unfortunately it isn't terribly surprising that over 22 percent of the commands 37 mishaps were attributed to human factor /error. Those could have all been prevented if we had paid more attention to risk management. Although the other mishaps were attributed to other categories, they all were somehow related back in the chain to the human aspect. Overall, $11M in assets could have been preserved had each of us practiced a little more attention to detail. We are off to a good start in FY09, let's all do our part to continue on this path. Fly safe. You are the key to safety.



tool, toy or weapon?

By Willard J. Smith, HQ AFSOC/SES

Lasers are associated with "Star Wars," "Star Trek," or "Battlestar Galactica". However, lasers have many more uses. Paraphrasing Mr. Webster, lasers are defined as "a device with a substance whose atoms can be put into an excited state which will emit coherent light of a precise wavelength in an intense, narrow beam. Additionally, this device can produce or amplify optical radiation which emits coherent electromagnetic radiation from the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum through the infrared portion within the spectral range of 200 nm to 1000 µm." Whew! We probably know it as a small electronic device when we push the button, a colored dot will appear on the wall where it is pointed.

However, today lasers play a pivotal role in our daily lives. You'll find them in almost everything around us. Not only the simple briefing pointer, they are in your DVD and CD player; they are in your office printer; in the doctor's office as precise medical instruments; tools in the construction area; in sophisticated weapon systems targeting identification and range finders; and I even saw an application using a laser to scare birds away.

The primary difference between all of these types of lasers is the wavelength of the emitted light and the associated output power. I hope everyone knows the human body is vulnerable to the output of certain lasers, especially the eyes and the skin. Because of the tremendous number of

uses for laser technology today it is easy to understand why DoD and Air Force are developing and using this technology into all sorts of new applications.

With the proliferation of lasers in everything, we are becoming comfortable and complacent with them. We treat all laser applications similar to the way we treat the little hand pointers we all are familiar with. But, with the advances in technology, some pointers for sale to the general public are now strong enough to burn skin, cause eye damage, start fires, and transmit a beam for great distances. Pointers are causing a lot of problems lately, because they are being aimed at airline pilots and drivers of cars. This often either startles or temporarily flash blinds the pilot or driver. This could result in sufficient incapacitation for the operators to lose control of the plane or car.

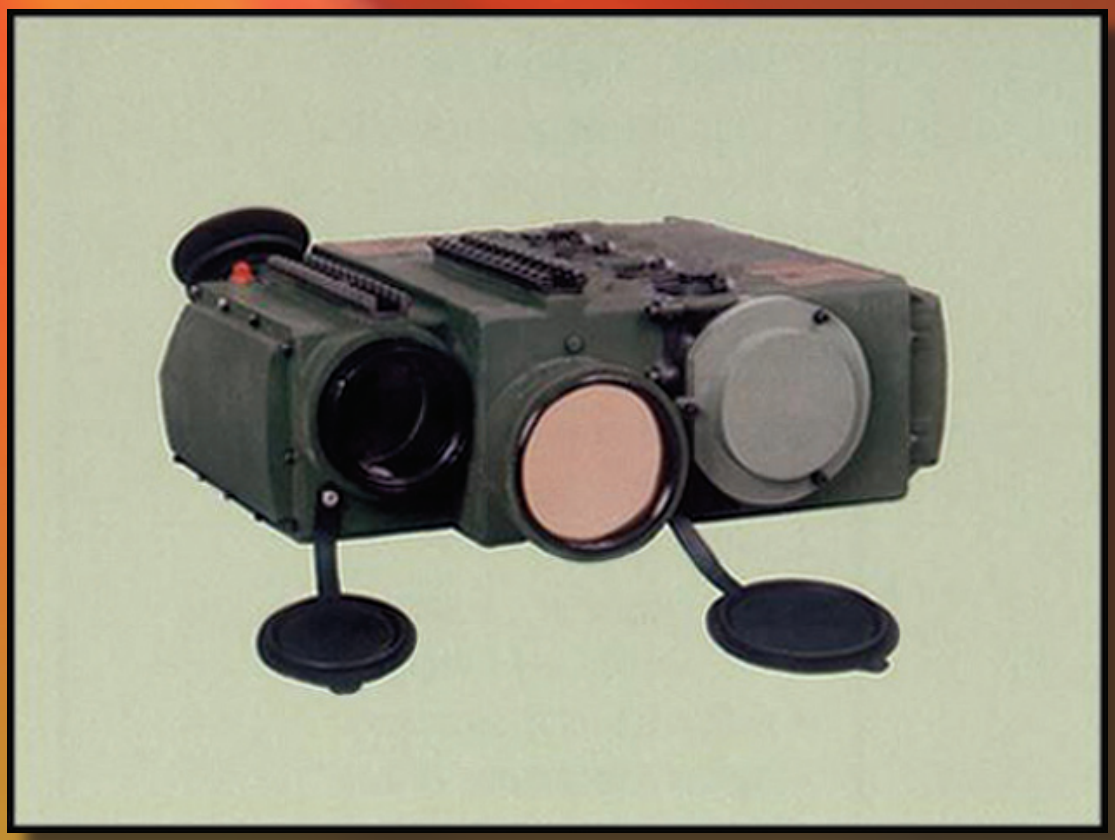
Now that lasers are leaving the laboratory and being developed for the operational environment, there is an obvious requirement to establish a program and process to make sure these lasers are safe, effective, and usable, but this rigid process takes place behind the scenes. It requires any laser used operationally be evaluated and authorized for use in the field whether developed or procured through the System Program Office (SPO) or through commercially developed sources. There are some exemptions to this requirement, so contact your local Laser Safety Officer (LSO) to make sure if your system needs this review or not.

Many might ask, if a system is for

sale on the open market, isn't it safe for use? Laser manufacturers must comply with federal rules for safety, but they are not required to evaluate their device in a military operational environment. The Air Force must ensure the safety of its personnel; therefore, measurements are performed on systems to ensure the personnel exposure to known hazards is fully characterized to prohibit injury to people and damage to other equipment. One known hazard in the ops environment is using optics, i.e. binoculars or scopes. Even a seemingly harmless laser when viewed through optics can become hazardous to the warfighter.

So what is the approval process? Once the system is in its final configuration to be fielded, the SPO will request Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) optical radiation safety team perform measurements and analyses of the system. If it is a commercially procured laser system, the user should initiate a request for review through the interested MAJCOM to AFRL/HEDO. This independent measurement process verifies the specifications of the Laser against identified hazards versus the assumed hazards from the manufacturer. After the raw laser beam output has been characterized, calculations are performed to define the laser hazards. A report of the analysis will usually specify the laser system classification, the Nominal Ocular Hazard Distance (NOHD), and the Optical Density (OD) requirements for Laser Eye Protection (LEP). From this analysis the diffuse reflection hazards are determined. These are all measurements needed to enable the user to safely use the laser system.

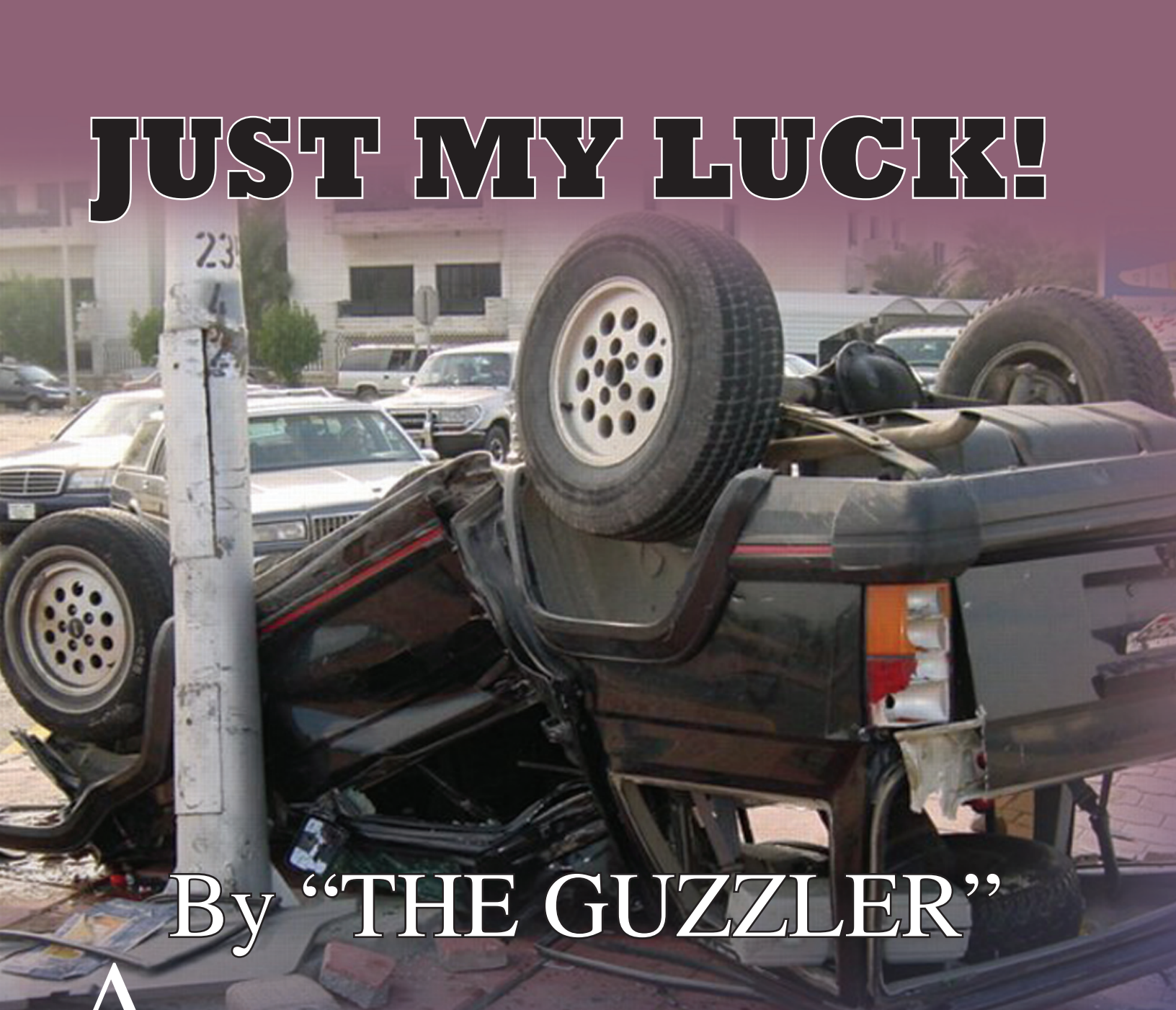
This system hazard evaluation report is reviewed for accuracy and then provided to the AF Laser System Safety Review Board (LSSRB) where the hazard



analysis perimeters are compared to operating procedures provided by the user to ensure a comprehensive analysis is obtained. Comments from this comparison review are forwarded to the DoD Laser Systems Safety Working Group for inclusion in the list of DoD approved systems published in Mil-HDBK 828A and submitted to the Surgeon General's Air Force Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA) who has ultimate approval authority for systems entering the Air Force.

The end result of this approval process is to provide the warfighter a laser system that has been carefully characterized and compared to the proposed CONOP of the user. Identified hazards should be mitigated. If this process is accomplished, the laser would be considered safe and effective to use in the operational environment.

JUST MY LUCK!



By "THE GUZZLER"

As an Airman I was exposed to the same "Don't Drink and Drive" message we have now. I really didn't need to hear it over and over again, the message was quite simple: "Don't Drink and Drive." Duh. I would think to myself, "who would be stupid enough to stagger to their car and drive off?" I was a heavy drinker back then (nicknamed "The Guzzler") but was always careful enough to have a plan n place ahead of time. I caught a ride or I walked.

Well, one night I staggered to my car after a night at the Club. Did I mention I was a heavy drinker? I was. I had built up a "tolerance" for alcohol much the same as you can build up a tolerance to anything. The more I had, the more it took to seemingly have an affect on me (psychologically anyway). I used to get buzzed from two or three beers. Then it started taking four or five… It got to the point where I would have

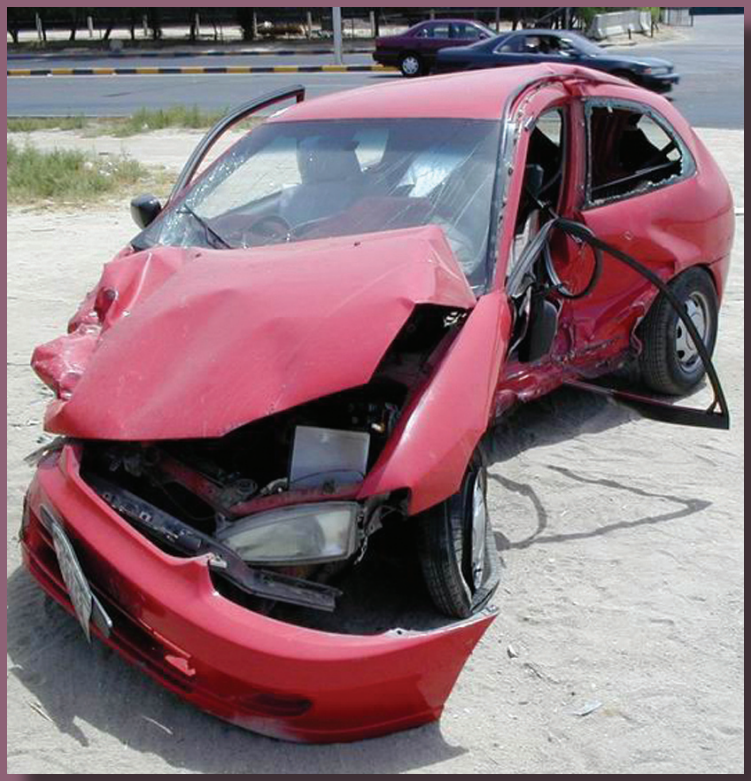
to drink more than a six-pack to feel the affects of alcohol. So why do I tell you this?

One fine day I decided to drive to the ATM on base. Yes, I had "a few" drinks. The scenario of a staggering lush lurching to their car never entered my mind as I walked to my own car; I felt stone cold sober. Remember, I built that tolerance up to where I needed many beers before I felt the affect (buzz). I was pulled over for a "Hollywood Stop" at a stop sign. Game over. I was arrested for DUI. Although I felt (and probably 'appeared') sober, my Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) was over the legal limit.

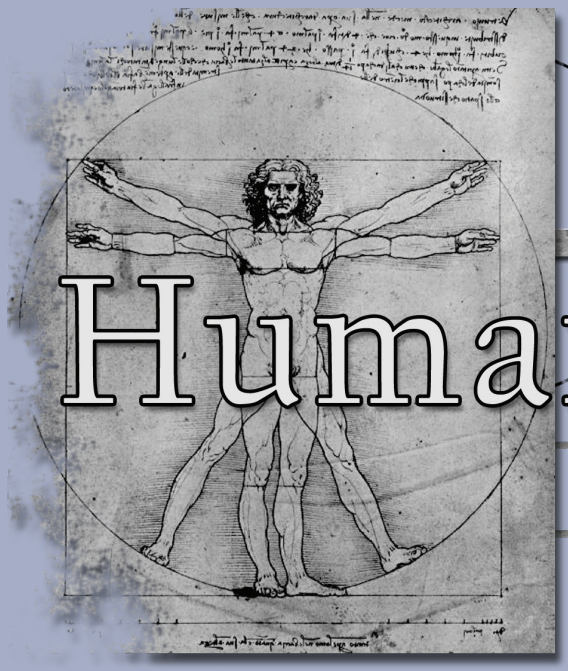
I learned about the "tolerance" thing when I attended the mandatory mental health training as part of my post DUI treatment. I am grateful the Air Force spent the time and resources to make that part of treatment; they didn't need to do that. "Mission First, People Always."

Moral of the story is best grasped by those who have ever had a few but felt completely "sober". You were probably not legally sober. Your BAC does not correlate to your perceived tolerance to alcohol. Although I felt completely sober at the time of my DUI– this was an illusion. The alcohol in my body was enough to put me over the legal limit. Would you want me in the car next to you on the highway? Think about this the next time you have a few at a BBQ or softball game or.... Although you may not be a sloppy drunk, you may very well be over the legal limit. If you are pulled over for a missing taillight, hit by another motorist or come across a checkpoint and you are indeed legally over the limit, your reflexes are affected.

You are not only a danger to yourself, but others. Have a plan. Don't drink and drive means just that. It does not mean don't drive after you "feel" drunk...but if you drink at all, you are affected.



Don't let this happen to you!



Human Factors FACTOIDS

By Maj Heather Alexander, AFSOC/SEH

Safety Climate Assessment Survey

Good for you! You are actually reading farther than just the title because, honestly, when you see 'survey' the first thought is NOT "gee, this should be a darn interesting article". Of course now, I have to convince you there is something in this for you. So, we are going to assume you care about the people who work for you, or the people you work with, or even the tools and equipment you need on a daily basis in order to accomplish the mission. Sound good?

Many of you may have already participated in the safety climate assessment conducted in AFSOC during 2007. For those commanders who completed the entire process, they received valuable feedback regarding the safety climate in their units. That survey was hosted by the Army Combat Readiness Center and utilized comparative data based on Army units. Since then, the Air Force Safety Center has fielded a comparable tool tailored specifically for Air Force organizations.

As a commander, a good question to ask is "Do my people think we have a [safety] problem?" There are currently 8 different, tailored survey tools available to address general or specific concerns. Not only does the survey highlight problems your people raise, but the debrief process at the completion of the survey provides interventions and strategies to improve the safety climate. In AFSOC, we are particularly fortunate to have an Aviation Psychologist qualified to conduct the debriefings, develop intervention strategies and conduct follow-up and face-to-face interaction on an as needed basis.

Okay, so you aren't a commander – what's in it for you? Seems to be just one more survey that no one gives you any feedback on. Actually, your commander gets near real-time feedback from this survey. If your unit has a great safety culture, your commander hears that and gets methods to help keep it that way. If however, the feedback indicates your unit has a poor safety culture, your commander gets

intervention strategies aimed at keeping you and your co-workers safer. In reality, having everyone at work healthy and in one piece sure makes your life easier.

Survey Options

On-duty

- Operations
- Maintenance
- Support Functions

Off-Duty

- Private Motor Vehicle
- Motorcycle
- Off-duty & Recreation
- Drinking & Driving

Voluntary Protection Program

Some fine print

Best time to implement a survey is within 30 days after a change of command, based on a deployment cycle, or if there is a particular issue or concern.

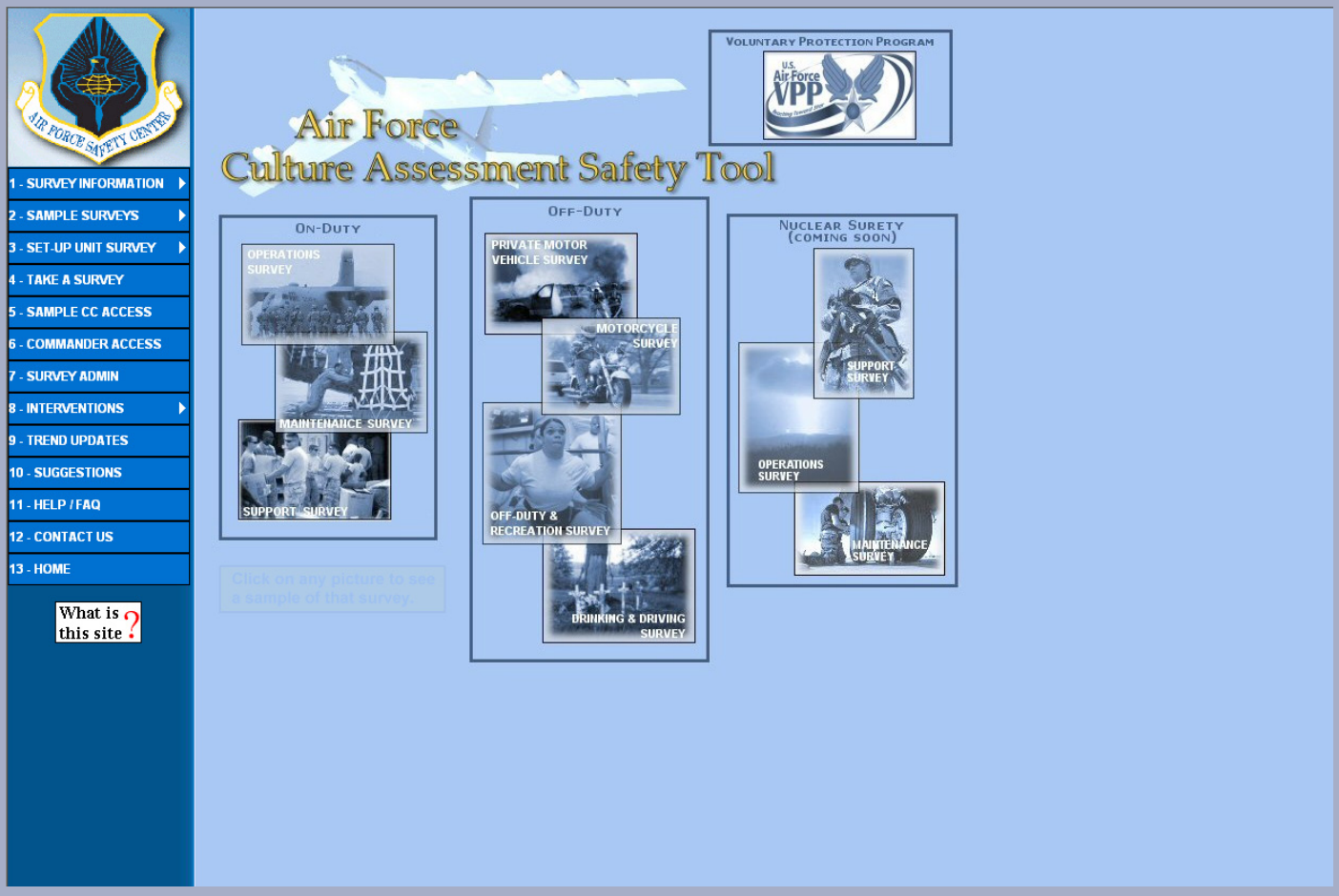
The survey is conducted on an anonymous basis with a 30 day maximum window to complete ensuring timely, realistic feedback.

Feedback is provided directly to the requesting commander and released to other individuals only with that commander's approval.

The survey itself should only take 8-10 minutes per individual.

Survey examples and answers to additional questions are available at: www.afcast.org

Additional questions may also be directed to AFSOC/SE (Maj Alexander, DSN 579-2044), AFSC/SEH (Maj Hughes, DSN 246-3763), or 1 OSS/OSM (Maj Young).



THERE I WAS...

A First Hand Account

Thoughts from Ben

This article is about situations most of us probably encounter daily. These events are typically unsafe and make us angry when we come across them. The people involved in these negative risk behaviors don't see the dangerous situations they are getting into. Sometimes a person becomes complacent so often, they think it is always the right way. My intent is to put focus on these situations and hopefully cause a little thinking and possibly correct a thing or two to make life safer for all of us.

Sometimes, we encounter a situation others are doing that is so dangerous that we want to do something about it immediately. When we encounter these issues we want to lose it and do something really stupid, but fortunately sanity reigns supreme and we generally contain ourselves. At times, we utter under our breath, some little saying that generally exemplifies our feelings. There are times when we take the effort to show our concerns with hand and arm gestures to the offenders. Sometimes, we chuckle at the absurdity of the situation and we wish a police officer were there to witness what is taking place.

Unfortunately, the first situation is one we all see. This one is hazardous and taken seriously. Seeing children not restrained in a car while in motion. It makes you just want to pull them over and let the driver know all the bad things that can happen to the children if they get involved in an accident.

During an accident, kids become unguided missiles within the car and bounce off everything within the vehicle... if they are lucky. If not, they can be thrown out of the vehicle through one of the windows or windshield. In either case, it's not nice what happens to their little bodies. This will happen; no one has enough strength to try to hold his or her children and prevent it.

As parents, don't you all love your kids and wouldn't you do anything for them? You bet your garters you would and do! You get them the latest style of shoes or clothing to make them feel cool and stylish. You get them the latest toys and gadgets for their enjoyment. You do all you can to make your children happy. Why won't you make the effort to buckle your kids up and provide them the best protection available? Recently, my grown daughter was involved in an accident that totaled the car and the thing I find most memorable about it was, after the accident, she thanked me for forcing her to always wear her seatbelt. Remember it's not only the law in many states; it's the right thing to do. If you love your children, buckle them up properly.

Think about it. See you next time, Ben!


COMMANDO
SAFETY